



# Great Basin

## Winter / Fire Potential Outlook



February 23rd, 2016



- 
- Recent Weather
  - El Nino
  - February through May Weather/Fire Potential Forecast
  - Extended Outlook into the Great Basin Fire Season

# Recent Weather Trend – Last 30 Days

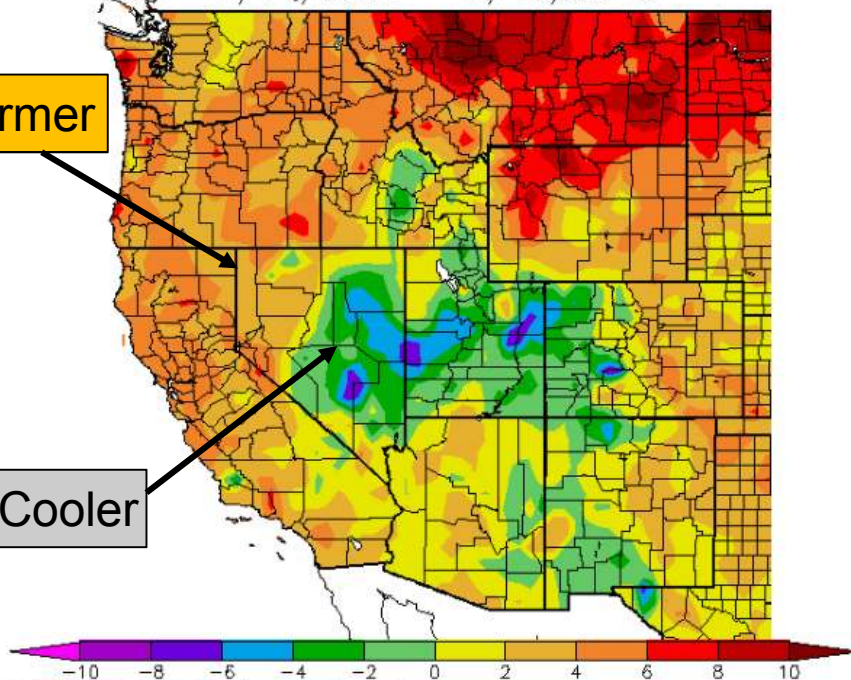
## Temperature Departure from Average

## Precipitation Percent of Average

Ave. Temperature dep from Ave (deg F)  
1/17/2016 – 2/15/2016

Warmer

Cooler

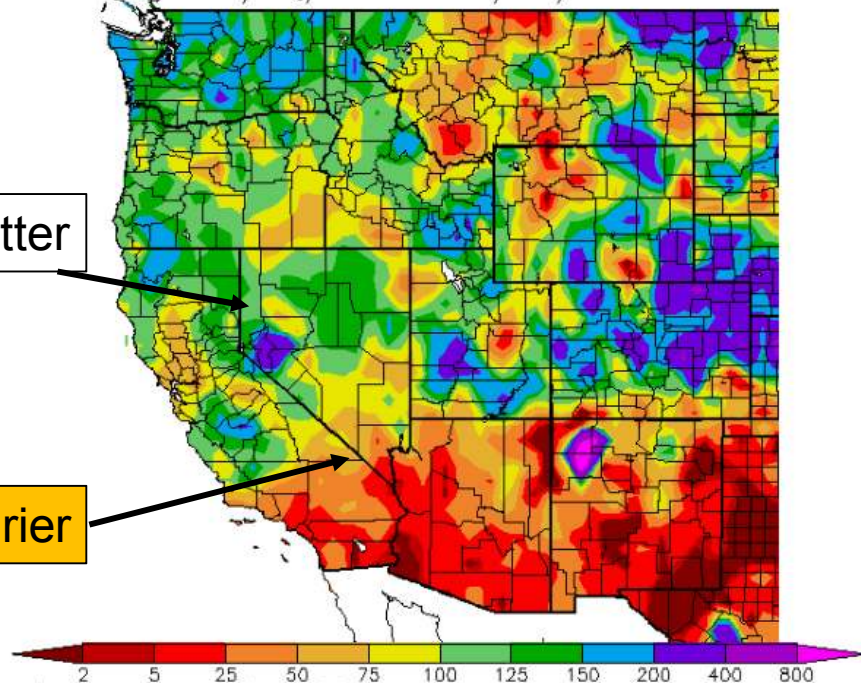


Generated 2/16/2016 at WRCC using provisional data.  
NOAA Regional Climate Centers

Percent of Average Precipitation (%)  
1/17/2016 – 2/15/2016

Wetter

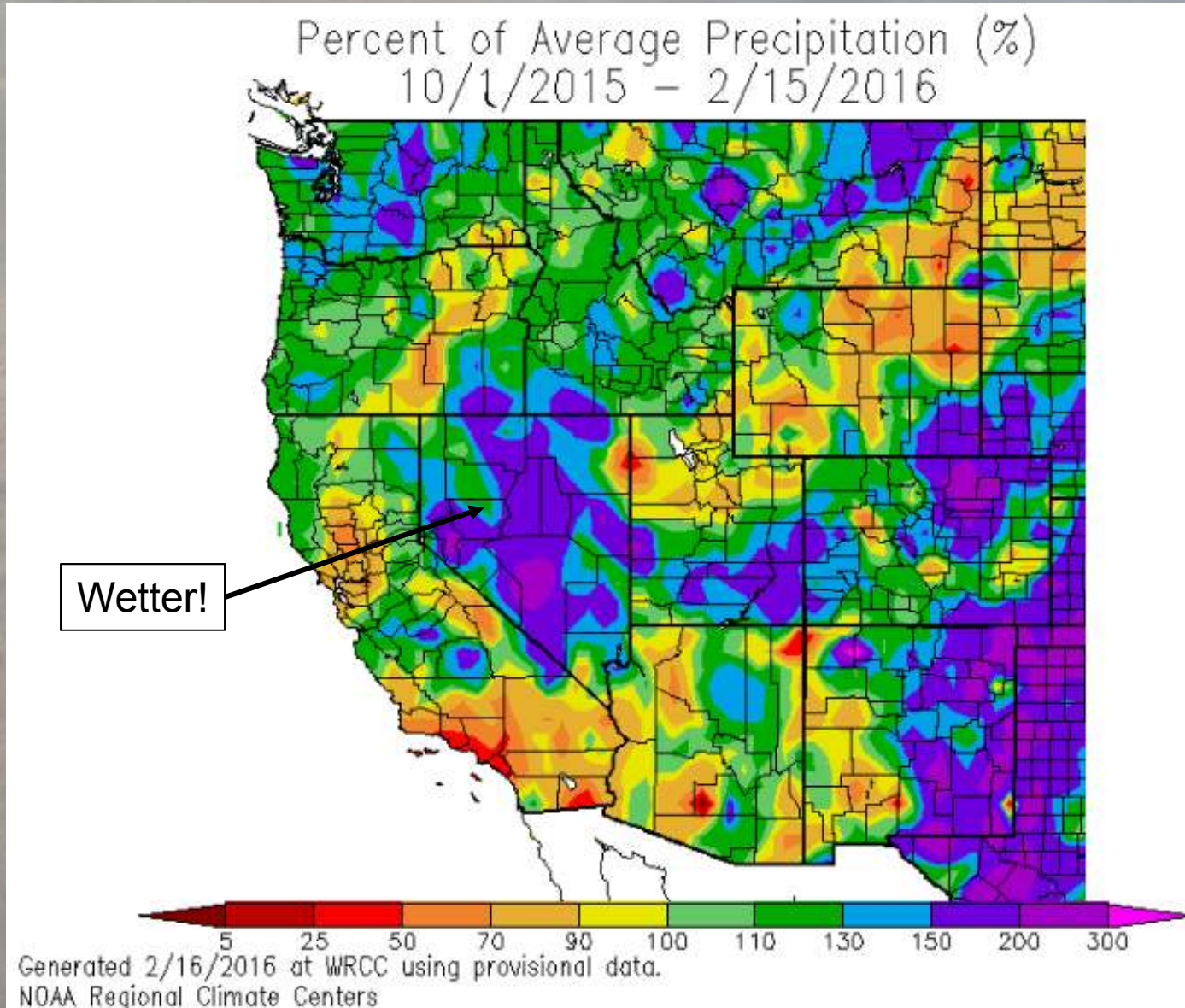
Drier



Generated 2/16/2016 at WRCC using provisional data.  
NOAA Regional Climate Centers



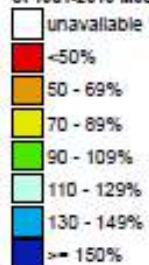
# Water Year Precipitation



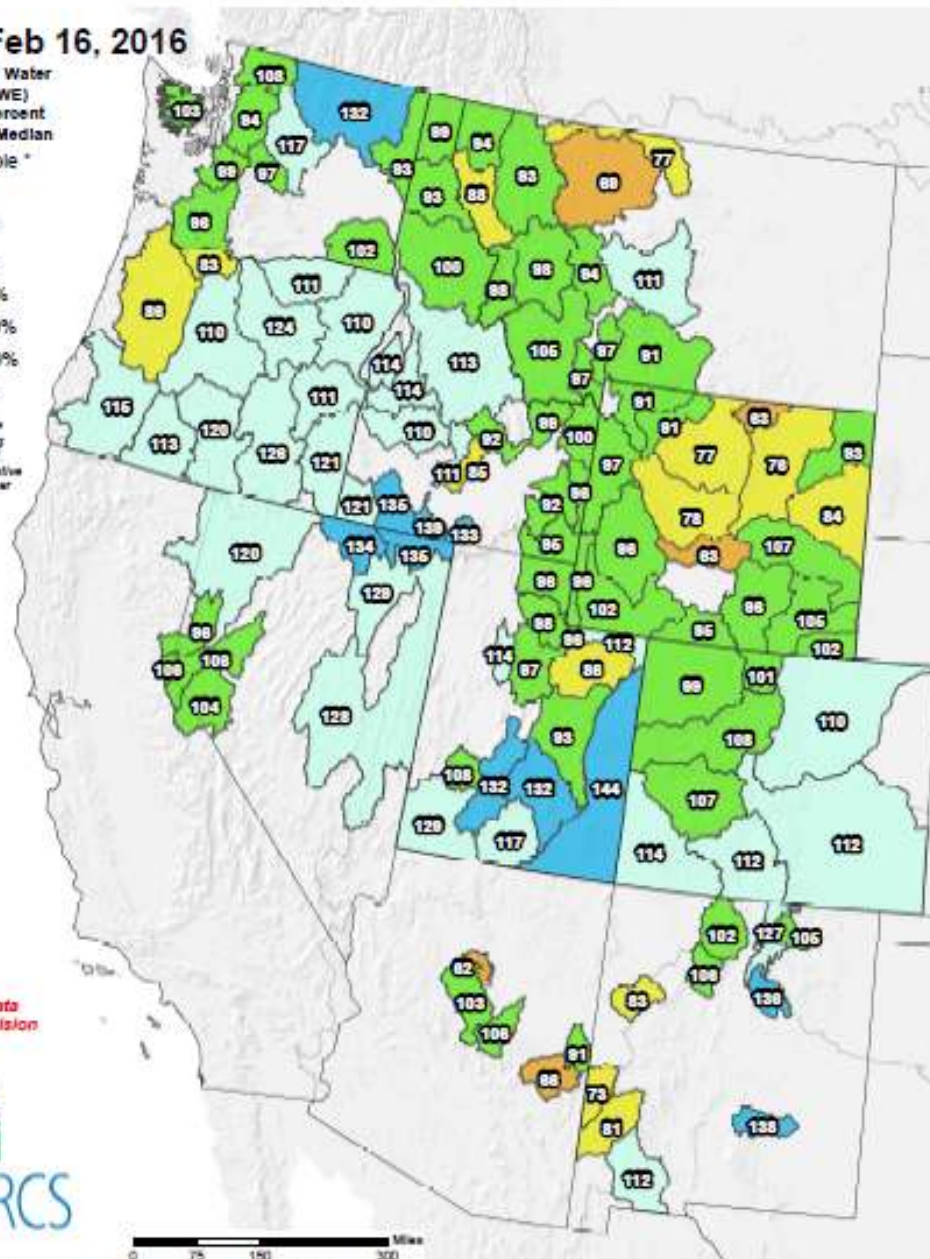
# Westwide SNOTEL Current Snow Water Equivalent (SWE) % of Normal

Feb 16, 2016

Current Snow Water Equivalent (SWE)  
Basin-wide Percent  
of 1981-2010 Median



\* Data unavailable  
at time of posting  
or measurement  
is not representative  
at this time of year



Provisional data  
subject to revision



The snow water equivalent percent of normal represents the current snow water equivalent found at selected SNOTEL sites in or near the basin compared to the average value for those sites on this day. Data based on the first reading of the day (typically 00:00).

Prepared by:  
USDA/NRCS National Water and Climate Center  
Portland, Oregon  
<http://www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov>

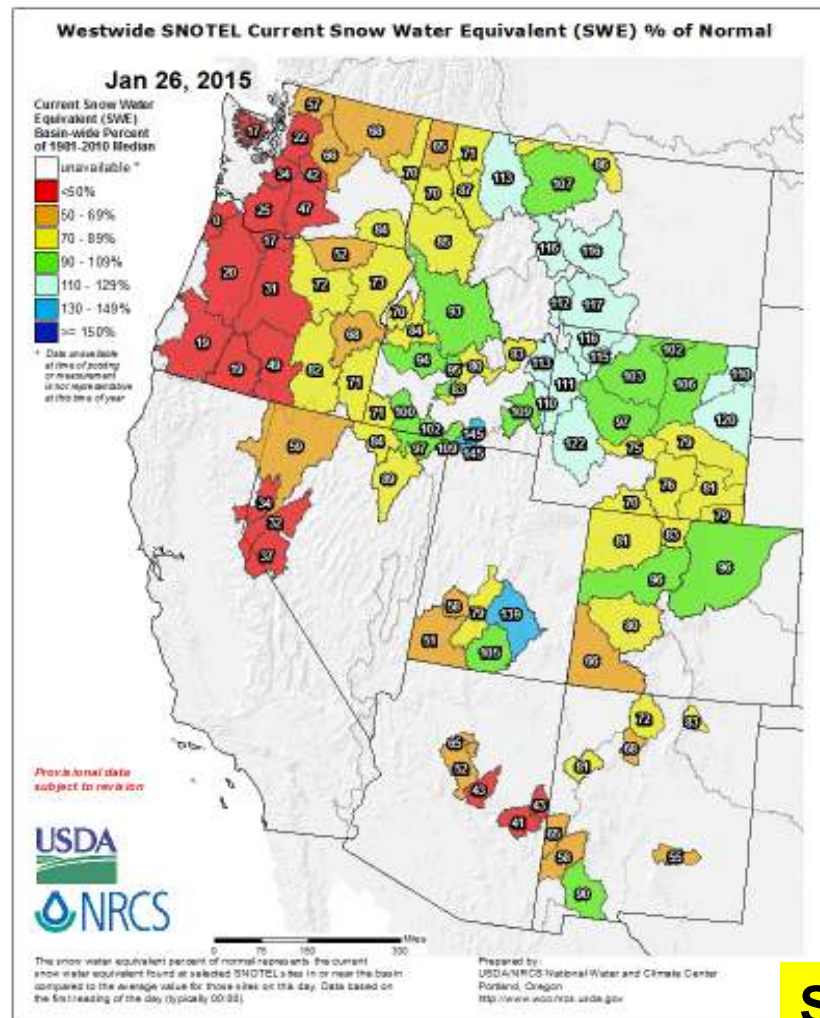
## Snowpack – February 16<sup>th</sup>, 2016

- Sierra Snowpack – 100-110% of normal
- Rest of Nevada – 120-135%

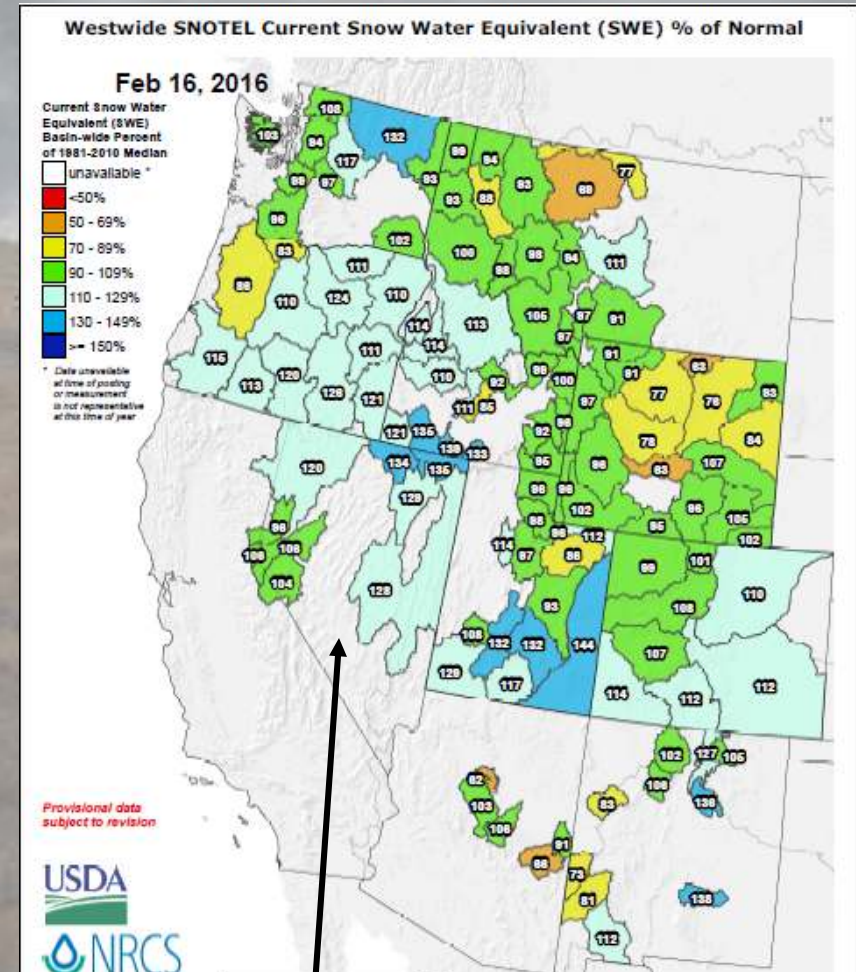


# What a Difference a Year Makes!

January 2015



February 2016

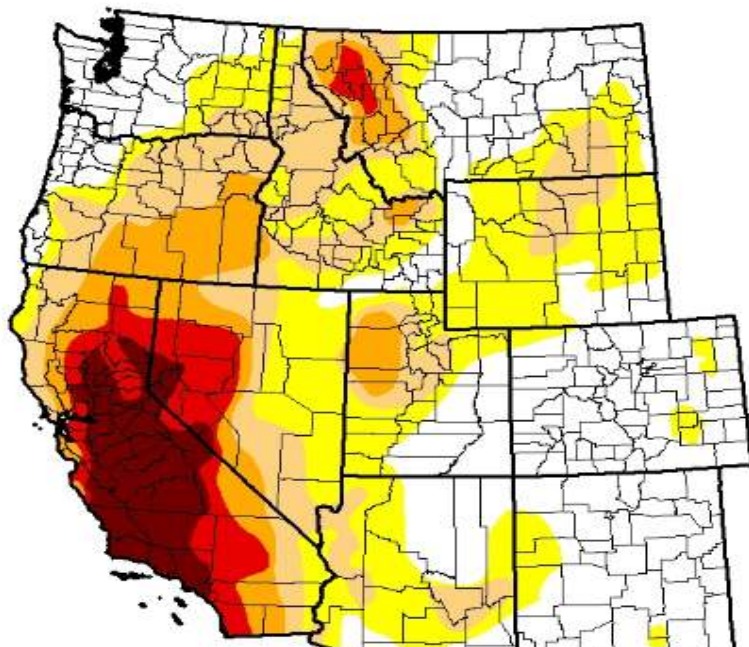


**Snowpack is double what it was last year**

# Drought Monitor and Outlook

## Drought Monitor

**February 9, 2016**



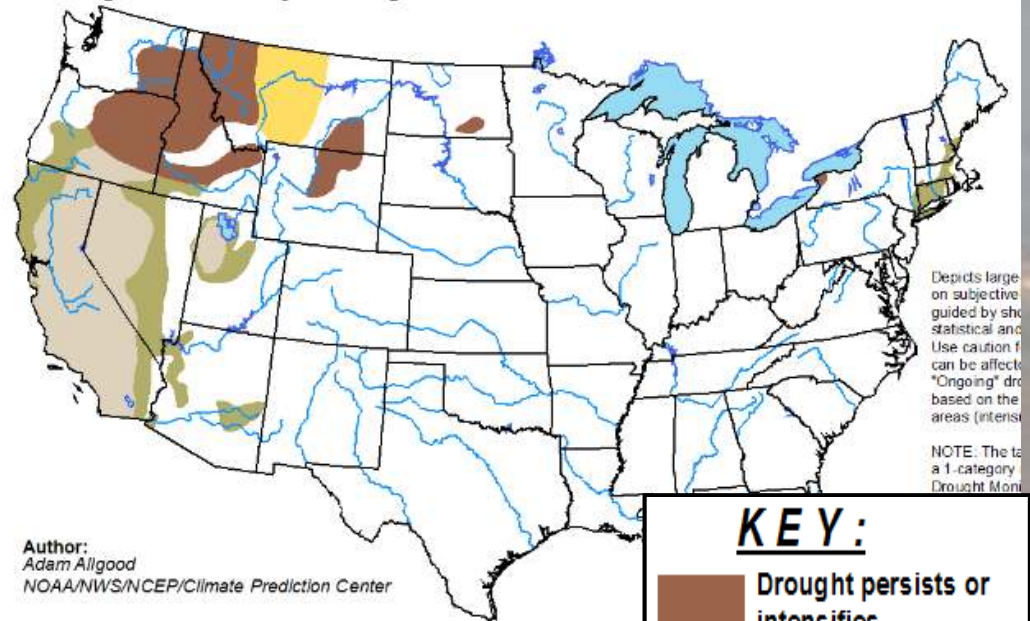
**Legend:**

- D0 Abnormally Dry
- D1 Drought - Moderate
- D2 Drought - Severe
- D3 Drought - Extreme
- D4 Drought - Exceptional

## Drought Outlook

**U.S. Seasonal Drought Outlook**  
Drought Tendency During the Valid Period

Valid for January 21 - April 30, 2016  
Released January 21, 2016



Author:  
Adam Allgood  
NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Climate Prediction Center

**January 21 – April 30, 2016**

### KEY:

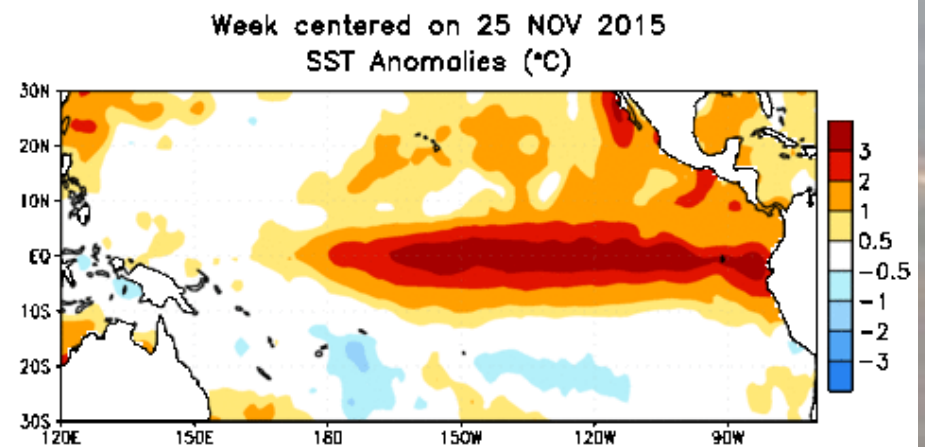
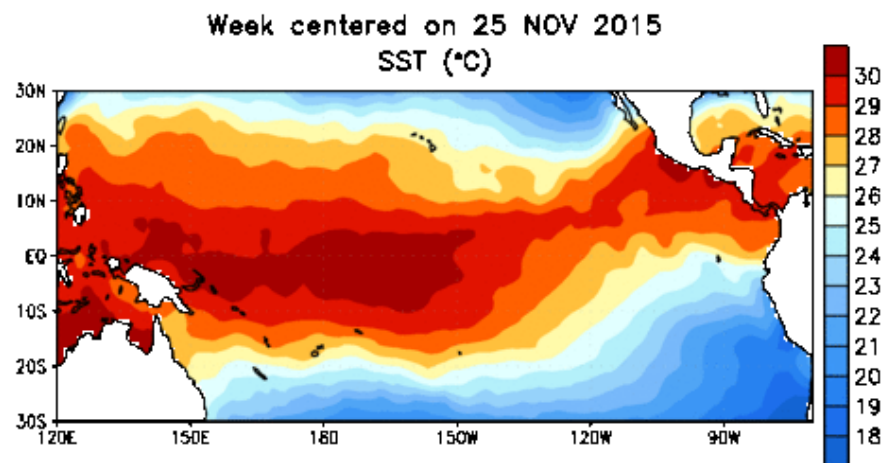
- Drought persists or intensifies
- Drought remains but improves
- Drought removal likely
- Drought development likely



# El Nino – Strongest in 18 Years

**Sea Surface Temperature  
(SST)**

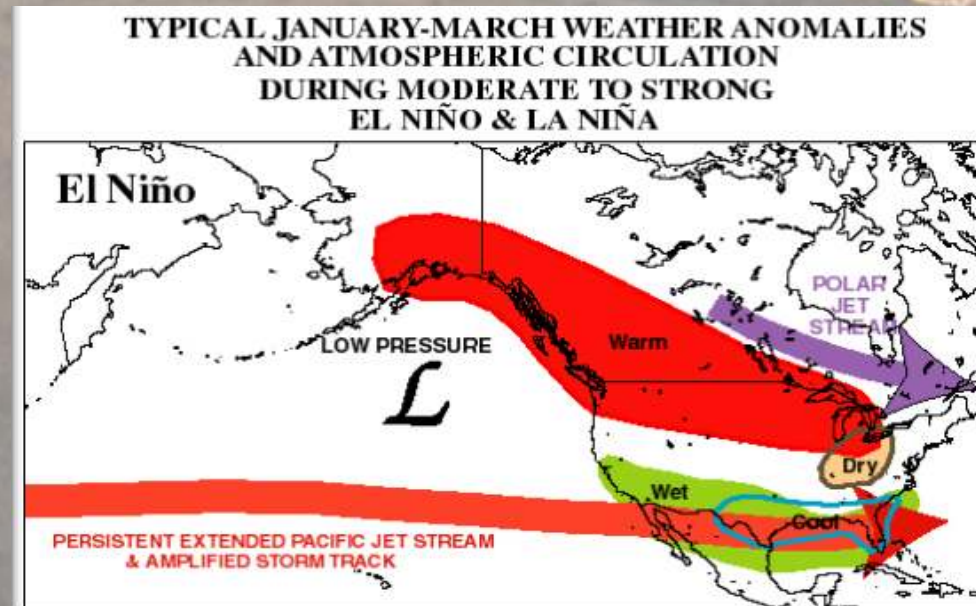
**SST Anomaly**





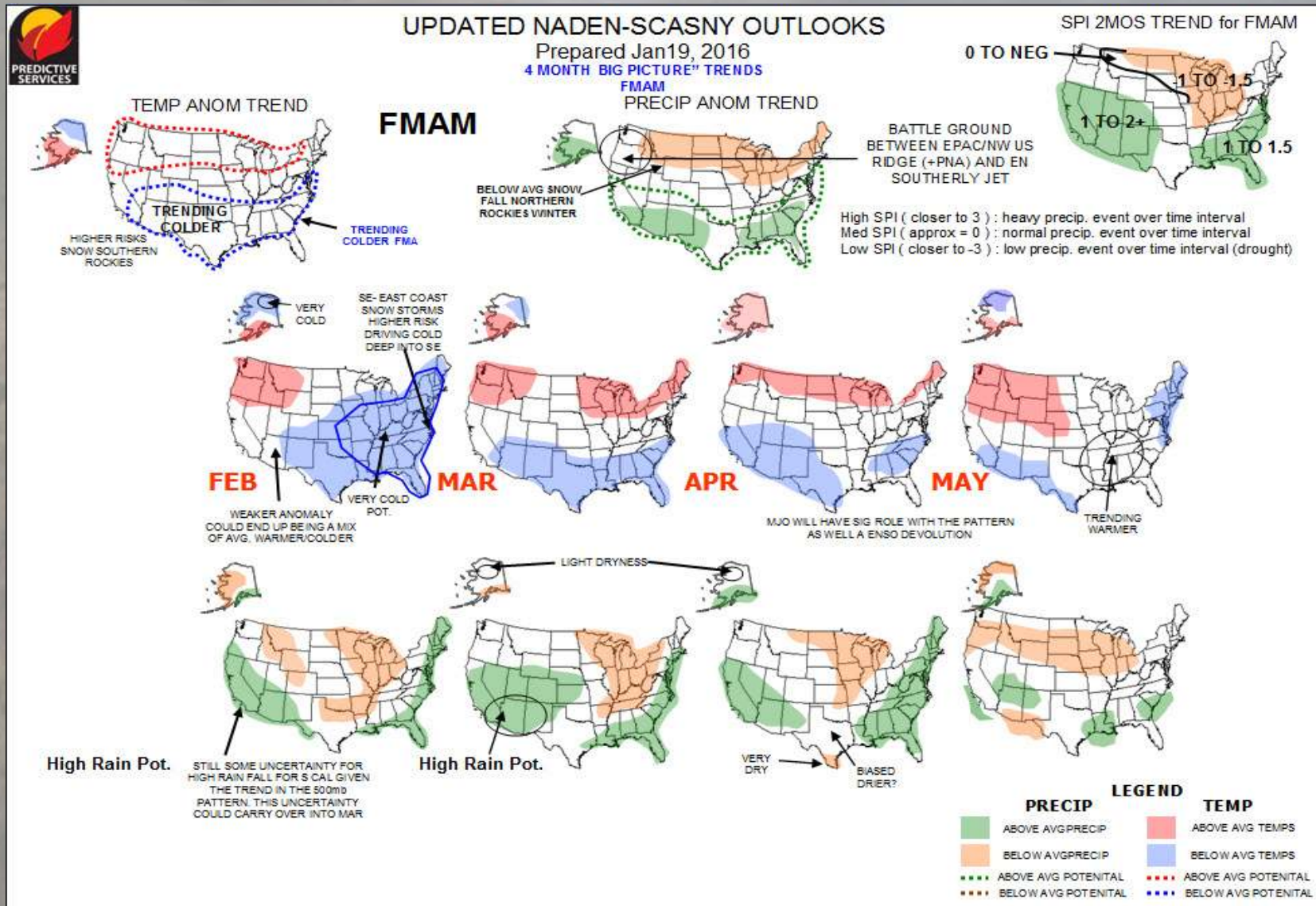
# El Nino 2015 – Strongest in 18 Years

- El Nino has likely seen it's peak over the last 1-2 months (warm sea surface temperatures west of South America)
- El Nino will likely gradually weaken through the spring with precipitation increases through the winter/spring across the Great Basin.
- Most common weather patterns in an El Nino winter/spring:



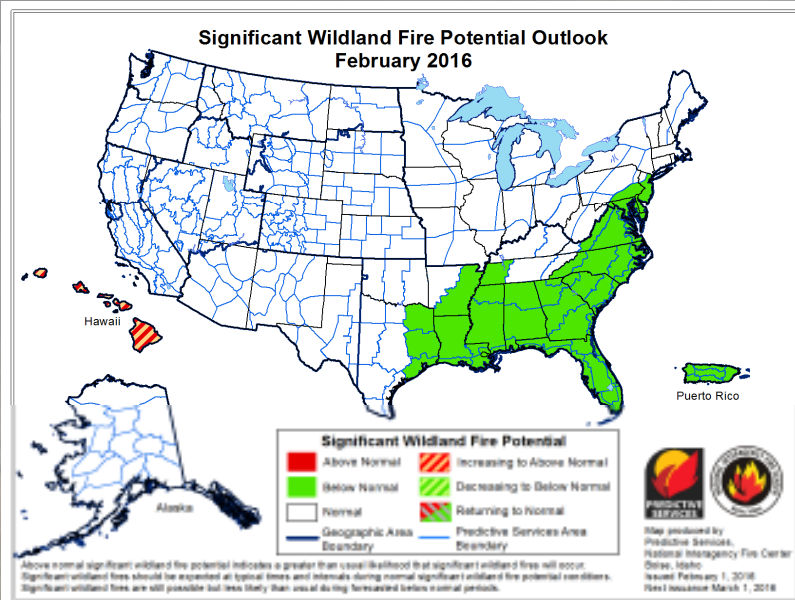
# Expected Weather February – May

## - PS

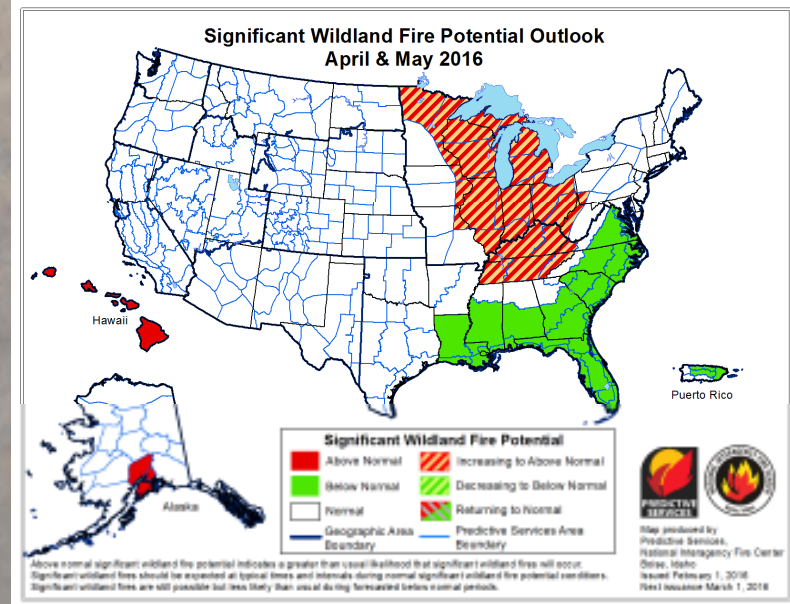
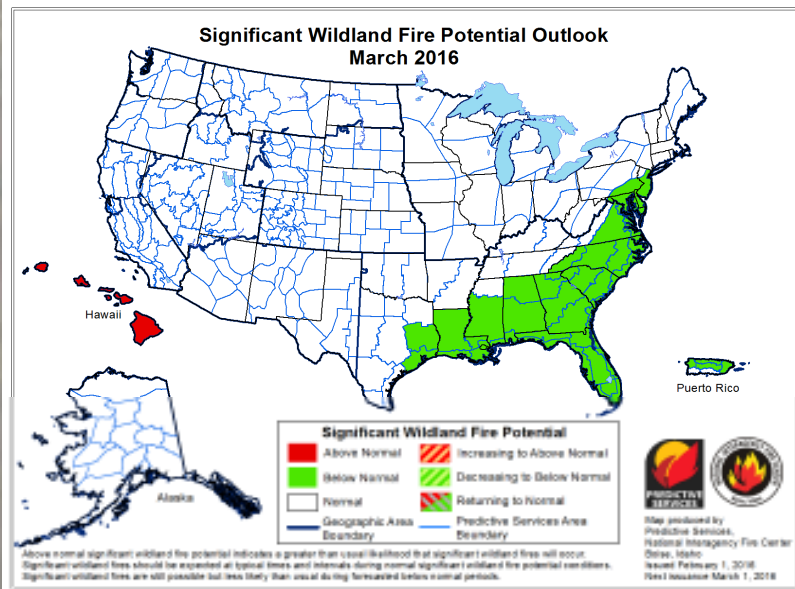




# National Fire Potential Outlook



- Normal fire potential is expected through May.
- Fire activity typically is very low from January through April, and typically starts to pick up in the southern portion of the basin later in May, although depending on rainfall this may be delayed.
- Brief periods of increased fire activity are still possible later in the outlook period if drier weather emerges for longer periods and winds increase.





# Summary

- Drought conditions persist over much of Nevada, but will likely continue to see some improvements through the spring, with greater improvements or drought removal over the eastern portion of Nevada.
- Annual and perennial fuels are in dormancy for the winter.
- Strong El Nino will dominate the weather pattern through the spring.
- Wet conditions expected throughout April, and may continue into May with the focus being the southern 2/3 of the state later in the spring.
- No Fire Concerns through May.
- Precipitation through the period will play a significant role for fuels/fire potential and timing for the 2016 fire season.

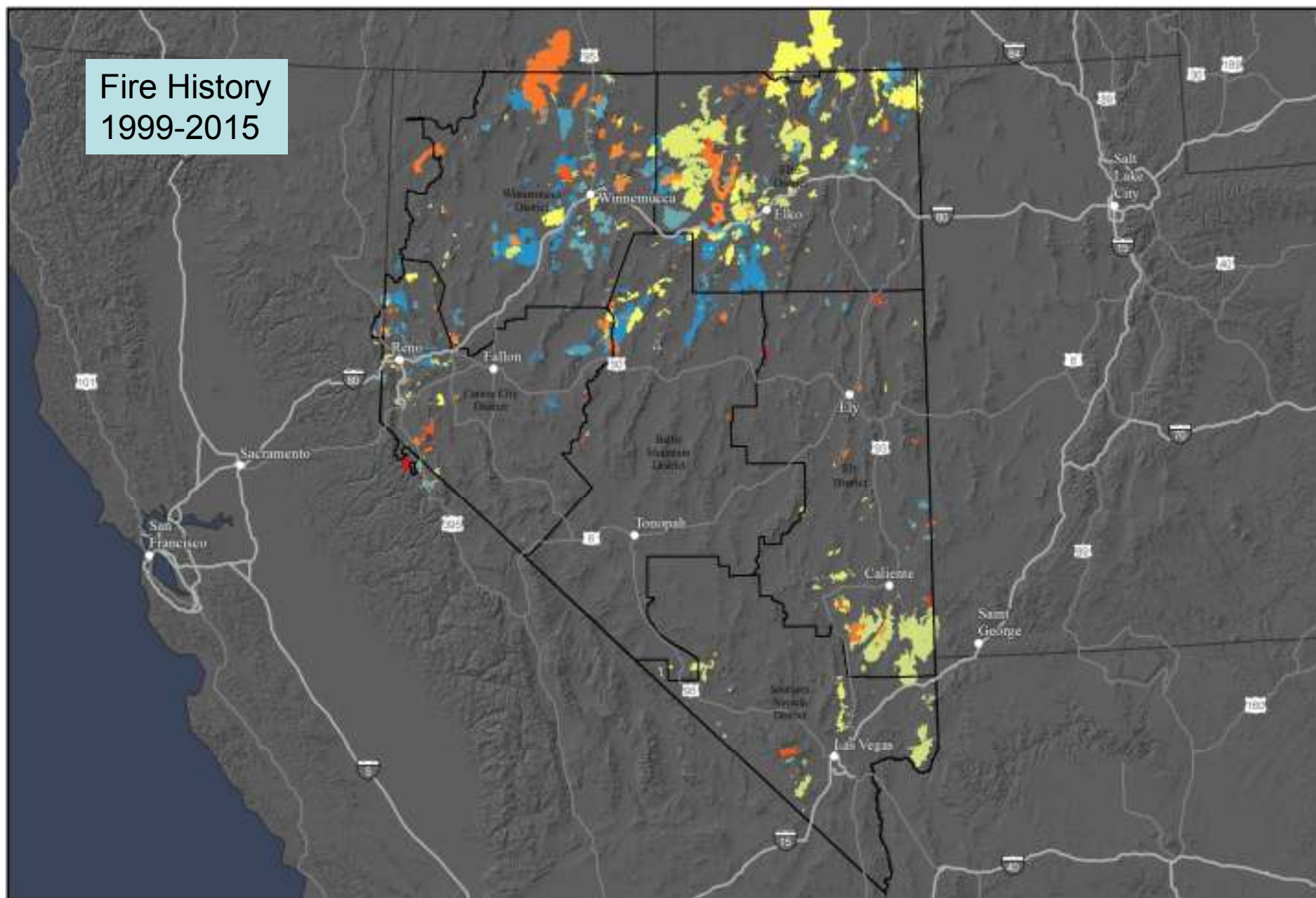


# Fire Management Priorities



1. Firefighter and Public Safety
2. Sage Grouse Habitat
3. Other Values and Priorities identified in the incident area.

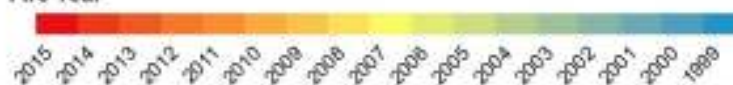
# Fire History 1999-2015



Date: 2/3/2016

No Warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data.

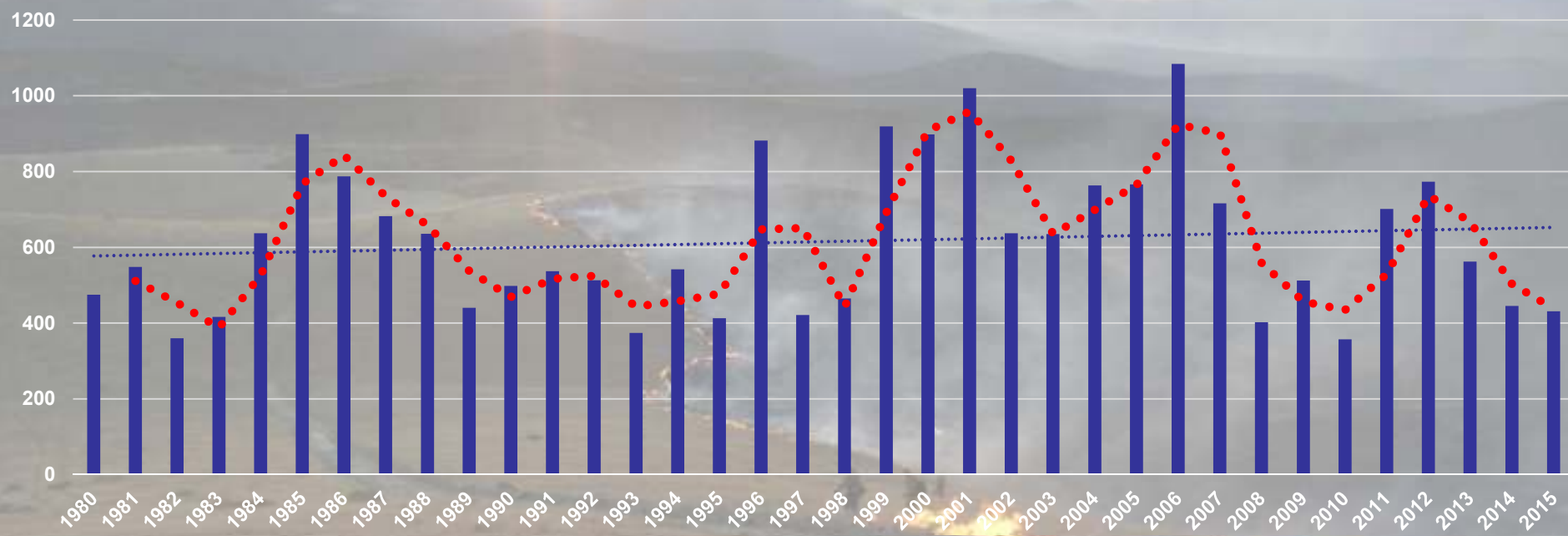
Fire Year



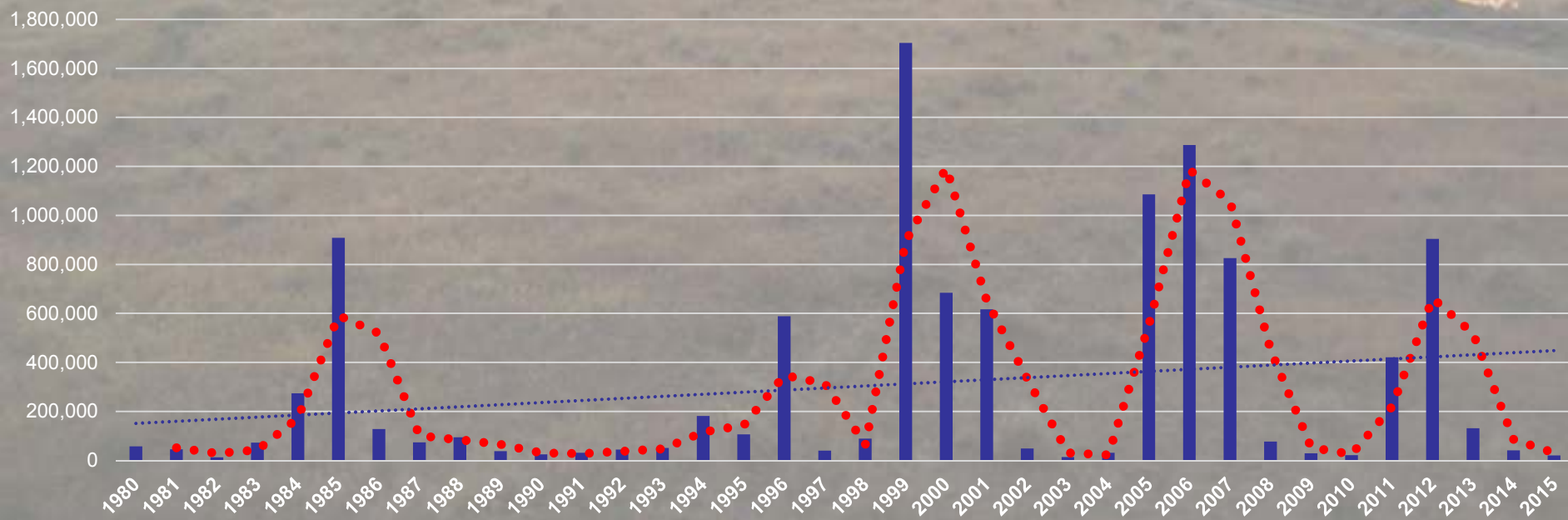
**NORTH**  
1:5,000,000



**Fire Ignitions 1980 - 2015**



**1980 - 2015 Acres Burned**



# 2015 – Highly Successful in NV

- Fires and Acres
  - Nevada 547 fires for 42,985 acres
  - BLM 343 fires for 17,520 acres
- Challenging Nationally
  - 13 Fatalities
  - Preparedness Level 5 for 24 Days. Longest since 2006
  - Alaska burned 5.1 million acres
  - Pacific Northwest burned 1.3 million acres
- Proactive resource prepositioning in Nevada
  - Maintained suppression resource levels during high level of national activity.



# DOD Fires and Incidents

- DOD & BLM Relationship is critical for success
- DOD has the knowledge of ranges, aircraft, dangers, access, security, additional assets
- BLM has the fire suppression equipment, IC's and ability to order additional resources.
- Preseason coordination is critical
- Reporting of fires in DOD areas is critical.
  - Allows BLM to develop priorities in the areas
- Fire Reporting – Shows workload and affects budget
- Fuels treatments – Reduce the risk to high value assets.

# 2016 BLM Planned Resources

- 7 Single Engine Air Tankers
- 3 Helicopters, positioned in Las Vegas, Ely and Elko with the ability to staff a total of 6.
- 3 Air attack Aircraft for aerial detection and fire air traffic control - Reno – Winnemucca - Elko
- 2 Hotshot Crews: Silver State Hot Shots (Carson City)
- Ruby Mountain Hot Shots (Elko)
- 1 Type 2 Initial Attack Crew (Vegas Valley Crew)
- 51 Fire Engines
- 6 Dozers (Winnemucca, Battle Mountain, and Elko)
- Additional aircraft and equipment will be brought to Nevada based upon heightened fire danger and ongoing wildfires



# Questions and Discussion

An aerial photograph of a wildfire in a hilly, arid landscape. A line of fire runs along a ridge, with thick smoke rising from it. Several firefighters are visible near the fire line. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a hazy, golden light across the scene.

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